

This Week in Washington



WITH CONGRESSMAN
JO BONNER

Paying Tribute to Our Nation's Heroes

Next week, we will have the opportunity to pay tribute to our nation's bravest citizens, the men and women who have served in America's armed forces.

What began in 1918 as a salute to the veterans of World War I, today, 90 years later, Americans continue to pause and say thank you to all who have served in defense of our country.

Let us be mindful of those men and women who have done so much to protect this nation and enabled us to continue to live in the peace and freedom for which our troops fought so bravely and continue to defend to this day.

Visiting Washington?

Many Americans will celebrate Veterans' Day with a trip to our nation's capital. If you are planning a trip to Washington, D.C. in the coming weeks, I encourage you to contact our office; we are honored to assist those from the First District with planning their visit.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the World War II Memorial are magnificent tributes to the sacrifices made in each of these wars. Perhaps the most sobering reminder of the contributions of our armed forces is at Arlington National Cemetery.

These are just a few examples of places to pay tribute to our nation's veterans, other include: the Navy Memorial, the Air Force Memorial, the National Marine Corps Museum.

From monuments to museums to memorials, there are so many things to do in this exciting and historical city.

The must-see stop on any visit to the nation's capital is the U.S. Capitol building itself. With at least a week's notice, my office can schedule a guided tour by a member of my staff, Monday through Friday, or you can receive a tour from the Capitol Guide Service on a first-come, first-served basis.

If your time in D.C. does not allow for a tour of the Capitol, I would encourage you to call my

office and request passes to visit the House gallery, where you can view the proceedings on the House floor, when the House is in session.

Please keep in mind there are security restrictions in place throughout the nation's capital that require visitors to plan their trips in advance.

For example, tours of the White House are subject to strict U.S. Secret Service approval. Tours can only be requested for groups of 10 or more people and must be requested through my office at least three months in advance. Unfortunately, many of the tour requests are not approved because of the volume of requests made each day.

Other popular landmarks offering congressional reservations include the Supreme Court, the Library of Congress, the State Department, and the Bureau of Printing and Engraving. Congressional reservations are limited, so I encourage you to contact my office about three months ahead of the date you plan to visit. Because these reservations are limited, I do give preference to the residents of Alabama's First District.

Remember, the monuments, memorials, and many of the museums throughout the city do not require reservations and are free to the public. Also, parking is extremely limited, and I encourage all visitors to take advantage of the Metro rail and taxis.

Constituent Services

One of the most important duties of my job representing the Alabama's First Congressional District is working on your behalf in your efforts to deal with federal bureaucracies.

Whether it's a problem you are having getting your veterans benefits restored or obtaining your IRS refund, my office can assist you with cutting through the red tape of federal agencies. While we cannot make an agency decide a case in your favor, we can assist you by seeing that it gets fair consideration.

We have assisted residents who have had problems with their Social Security and Medicare benefits and those who have had problems with the Internal Revenue Service.

Veterans with questions concerning claims for VA pensions, disability benefits, care in VA hospitals, burial benefits, and military records have also contacted my office for assistance.

Many residents of south Alabama have used my office as a resource, and I encourage you to do the same.

The Federal Privacy Act requires us to have written authorization to act on your behalf. To comply, Privacy Act forms can be obtained on my website <http://bonner.house.gov> , from my Mobile and Baldwin County offices, or you may simply send a brief description of your problem.

If you write, call, or email, please include your Social Security number and/or VA number.

My staff and I work for you. If we can ever be of service, do not hesitate to call my office toll free at 1-800-288-8721 or visit my website at <http://bonner.house.gov> .

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